

**Draft Summary of the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
March 25, 2004**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group (RSWG) on March 25, 2004 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Flip Chart Notes
Attachment 4	Presentation: R-7 (Reservoir Boating)
Attachment 5	Presentation: Lake Oroville SRA General Plan

Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the RSWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations and the desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Meeting flip chart notes are included as Attachment 3.

Action Items – February 22, 2004 Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting

A summary of the February 22, 2004 RSWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #R101	Report back to the Plenary Group regarding the disposition of resource actions that the JPA requested to be transferred to the "A" list.
Status:	As explained to the Plenary Group several days earlier, Doug Rischbieter (DWR) stated that there have been no changes made to the RSWG resource action lists. The lists were not revised as initially requested by the JPA based on the subsequent agreement that the scope of the cross-resource discussions would be expanded to include all proposals with submitted resource action identification forms. Doug explained that the resource actions in question are considered large settlement items that would not be appropriate for inclusion in the PDEA. Doug reminded the RSWG that the cross-resource discussions are continuing and confirmed that the RSWG is planning to meet with the Cultural Resource Work Group next month.
Action Item #R102:	Bring copies of study reports presented at previous meetings to subsequent RSWG meetings.
Status:	Copies of previously distributed study reports were available at the meeting. As study reports are completed they will be available for distribution at future RSWG meetings.
Action Item #R103:	Append cross-resource meeting flip chart notes to the February RSWG meeting summary.
Status:	The cross-resource action flip chart notes have been appended to last month's RSWG meeting notes that are posted on the Oroville Relicensing web site.

Action Item #R104: Update RSWG resource matrix based on new information acquired since the last update.

Status: Doug Rischbieter reported that since only one new proposed resource action has been submitted to DWR related to recreation and socioeconomics since the last RSWG update so the Work Group's matrix has not been re-distributed. The new proposed resource action was submitted by Butte County and calls for setting objectives for future recreation visitation growth at the Oroville facilities. He also noted that several resource action identification forms have been submitted for resource actions that have already been included on the matrix. Doug added that the revised matrix could be distributed to the RSWG if warranted by further additions or revisions however there is no immediate plan to do so.

Review Comments on Reports

The RSWG was given the opportunity to provide comments on the study reports that were presented at the February 2004 RSWG meeting. Many of the comments were recorded as flip chart notes (see Attachment 3). The RSWG was asked to provide written comments to DWR if possible and reminded that the comment period is 30 days from release of the report. Verbal comments provided at the RSWG meeting are summarized below; some of the verbal comments elicited replies or additional information from consultant staff and this information is also summarized herein.

R9 – Existing Recreation Use

- References to non-motorized boating activities are not clear at certain points in the report. Are non-motorized boating activities included in estimates of boating?
- Describe differences in methodology used by the consultants to quantify recreation use in the study report versus the methodology historically used by DPR to estimate recreation attendance.
- Need to use consistent methodology when projecting recreation use out into the future.
- Fiscal year 2002/03 visitation was lower than the average over the last 12 years due to relatively low lake levels. As a result, although the numbers presented in R9 are accurate and based on good methodology, there will be an adjustment to the existing use numbers for the purpose of projecting recreation use out into the future.
- Barriers to recreation use and accessibility such as inoperable boat ramps need to be considered when evaluating historical attendance data.
- Lake levels, particularly at certain points in the recreation season, are a major factor influencing recreation use levels. It was noted that the recreation use models developed as part of R12 (Recreation Use Projections) use lake level as the main variable influencing recreation use at Lake Oroville.

R14 – Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation

Iris Mayes (EDAW) is the lead author for R14, however she was not in attendance at the meeting. The RSWG participants provided comments that will be forwarded to Iris who plans to attend the April RSWG meeting to respond and answer any outstanding questions related to R14. Comments from the RSWG included the following:

- It was noted that visitation has been generally decreasing over the past 30 years with population increasing (roughly doubling) over that timeframe.
- Why does the report conclude that special events and new facilities would not attract new visitors to Lake Oroville? One participant suggested that special events are published in national magazines and people often plan around such events. It was also noted that participants in special events frequently bring spectators with them who then generate economic activity in the special event host community.

- Why is there such a discrepancy between historical DPR attendance estimates (roughly 600,000 on average) and the current estimate in the study reports (roughly 1.7 million)? Which is the correct number?
- It is surprising that the DPR statewide report (SCORP) does not specifically mention boating activities and also reports low mountain biking activity. It was noted that these conclusions might be a result of the manner in which individual recreation activities are aggregated.
- The statement that there is some latent demand for swimming in the Project area is considered an understatement.
- Jim Vogel (EDAW) noted that this report relies on numerous data sources, which do not always agree with one another.
- General and/or regional recreation studies may not be applicable to the Oroville Facilities because they do not consider site-specific characteristics that influence recreation patterns.
- The survey question regarding special events is not comprehensive. Special events have “value”, as they serve as a marketing tool for the facility and region. Although some event spectators are local residents, special events mainly attract non-local visitors to the region, which translates into non-local expenditures in the local economy. People that participate in special events may also use the venue at other times during the year to practice.
- The report lacks quantification of the type and extent of recreation facilities at the regional recreation sites evaluated in the report. Pete Soderberg (JPA) suggested that without a comprehensive inventory of regional facilities, it is not possible to determine what Lake Oroville’s market share is in terms of physical facilities (not attendance) and no way to determine what the adequate supply of recreation facilities should be based on acceptable use factors. It was noted that complete data for all regional recreation sites are not consistently available because these other facilities have not been subject to the same data collection processes as Lake Oroville and such information collection is outside of the agreed on scope for the R14 study.
- The report provides good information, but the conclusions presented throughout the report were difficult to pull out. All of the conclusions in the various recreation-related study reports should be presented in a summary form for each report to assist in the development of the Recreation Plan that will be prepared for the Project.
- Local residents don’t typically attend special events, but non-local participants and visitors often bring friends and family, who spend money in the local economy. The conclusion regarding special events may affect the approach to facility selection and siting.
- It was clarified that the phone survey question regarding special events was not asked of locals. The question needs to be asked of those people who participate in special event activities, such as boaters (boat races) and equestrians (trail rides), etc.
- It was suggested that the consultants describe the analytical process through which the conclusion regarding special events was made; this was identified as an action item for the upcoming RSWG meeting.
- Potential ancillary benefits to special events, such as people and businesses relocating to the area should be considered. The evaluation of these benefits is not in the scope of this study, but may be addressed in one of the socioeconomic reports being prepared for the Project.
- The objectives listed in the study plans could be included in each study report so it can be determined if the report is consistent with the study scope.
- The manner in which questions are asked is important to the responses obtained. Jim Vogel (EDAW) clarified that the question regarding special events was asked in both an open-ended manner and with a list of potential special events.
- The RSWG discussed how the study reports would be used in the relicensing process. Chuck Everett (EDAW) explained that each of the reports provide information that would be used to develop the Recreation Needs Analysis. Chuck noted that it is difficult to draw

conclusions for each study and that the RSWG review helps to further refine these conclusions.

- Figure 5.5-1: Remove the reference to bicycle trails on the legend because none are shown on the map.

R15 – Recreation Suitability Analysis

- It is acknowledged that in-fill development is more efficient than new development in terms of recreational site development.
- The Craig Saddle area was identified as a potential location for a large new recreational development, as it was in the original recreation plan for the Project. However, it is an area of high cultural sensitivity.
- What are the environmental issues referenced on page 6-2?
- The existing Craig Saddle access road is a significant barrier to development and there appears to be a shift by some of the local residents in the area who now are opposed to additional recreational development in the area.
- Cultural sites were not included in the GIS analysis for this study, and as a result, cultural issues need to be reviewed separately when evaluating recreation suitability.

State Parks General Planning Presentation

Bob Hare (DPR) updated the RSWG on the State Parks General Planning process underway for the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (see Attachment 4). This presentation was also provided to the Plenary Group earlier in the week. Bob explained that the General Plan will be more conceptual and less specific than the recreation plan that will be developed as part of the FERC relicensing effort. Refer to Attachment 4 for details on the planning process and its relationship to the relicensing process. The RSWG was informed that the initial public scoping meeting for the general plan process is scheduled for April 14, 2004 from 7-9 PM at the Municipal Auditorium in Oroville.

The RSWG briefly discussed the General Plan process and schedule. Bob explained that funding for Tier 2 proposals (i.e., specific projects that meet the general objectives identified in the plan) that would eventually be implemented by DPR has not been secured. Project funding is accomplished through a DPR-internal budgeting process that cannot be initiated without an approved General Plan; the existing General Plan is over 30 years old and is due for an update. It was also noted that an approved General Plan is required for development at any State Park unit. The General Plan for the LOSRA is somewhat unusual because it must be consistent with DWR's requirements to FERC.

Study Report Distribution

Doug Rischbieter reminded the RSWG that two new study reports were scheduled for release at the meeting: R-4 (*Assessment of Fish and Wildlife Management and Recreation*) and R-7 (*Reservoir Boating*); however, study R-4 was delayed due to some fundamental errors that could not be corrected in time for the meeting. The PowerPoint presentation for R-7 is included as part of the meeting summary as Attachment 5. During and after the presentation there was opportunity for brief questions and answers that are summarized below. The RSWG was instructed to review the report and provide comments in writing or at the next RSWG meeting for further discussion.

R7 – Reservoir Boating

- The report needs to consider the range (min/max) of water surface elevations; this drives the boating capacity of the reservoir.
- Does the report look at mooring capacity (i.e., opportunities for beach access)? This issue was considered, but was evaluated on an observational basis only.

Cultural / Land Use Cross-Resource Issues

The RSWG met last month with the Engineering and Operations Work Group and Environmental Work Group to discuss cross-resource issues including potential conflicts among proposed resource action measures. Doug confirmed with the RSWG the desire to meet with the Land Use Work Group and Cultural Resource Work Group to discuss potential conflicts and/or opportunities between proposed recreation developments, land uses, and culturally sensitive areas. A three-way, cross resource Work Group meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2004 in Oroville, however Doug noted that this meeting currently conflicts with a settlement training meeting scheduled for the same day in Sacramento. DWR is investigating the possibility of re-locating the settlement training meeting to Oroville and delaying the start of the cross-resource meeting until 6:00 pm. The RSWG will be notified once the meeting date/time/location is confirmed.

Next Steps

Doug Rischbieter reviewed the schedule for release of upcoming study reports. Studies R-4 (*Assessment of Fish and Wildlife Management and Recreation*), R-3 (*Assess Relationship of Project Operations and Recreation*), R-5 (*Assess Recreation Areas Management*), and R-12 (*Projected Recreation Use*) are scheduled for distribution and presentation at the April 2004 RSWG meeting. However, Doug has concerns with meeting this schedule based on necessary key internal DWR review by engineering and operation staff. As a result, there may be the need to postpone next month's RSWG meeting or distribute fewer than four scheduled reports.

The RSWG will be notified once the meeting is confirmed and agreed tentatively to the following meeting date/time:

Date: Thursday, April 29, 2004
Time: 6:00 to 10:00 PM
Location: Oroville

Action Items

The following list of action items identified by the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

Action Item #R105: Present the analytical process (data collection through conclusion) as it relates to the discussion on special events in the R-14 study report.

Responsible: Consultant Team
Due Date: April 29, 2004

Action Item #R106: Include study plan objectives in all of the study reports.

Responsible: Consultant Team
Due Date: *Ongoing*

Action Item #R107: Notify RSWG participants regarding the status of the cross-resource meeting tentatively scheduled for April 20, 2004.

Responsible: Facilitator
Due Date: April 6, 2004

Action Item #R108: Notify RSWG participants regarding the status of next month's Work Group meeting tentatively scheduled for April 29, 2004.

Responsible: Facilitator
Due Date: April 15, 2004